



State of Connecticut
House Of Representatives

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Testimony in Support of S.B. 24
Higher Education and Employment Committee
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Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Willis, Senator Witkos, Representative Betts, and esteemed members of the committee,

I am here today to testify in support of **S.B. 24, An Act Concerning Program Approval for Independent Institutions of Higher Education**. These changes are necessary to help save costs, provide consistency and allow Connecticut to be competitive in a constantly evolving marketplace.

COST - The current program review process for our independent colleges is both costly and time consuming. Our colleges report that there are many hours, documentation requirements and resources spent complying with the current program review requirements. These are on top of the already rigorous accreditation process requirements. I would certainly prefer that these resources be directed elsewhere, such as providing financial aid to students in need.

CONSISTENCY - Four of our sixteen private colleges and universities are already exempt from the program review requirements and in 2013 our public institutions were exempted as well. It is important that we provide this same opportunity to streamline the process to the universities that produce almost half of the bachelor's degrees in our state. Let's be consistent with our practices.

COMPETITIVENESS - I have heard from both colleges and businesses alike the importance of responsiveness from our institutions of higher education. When a business comes in and seeks to partner with our colleges, we want them to be able to respond in a timely, and of course, responsible way. This type of partnership, responsiveness and collaboration is what will help Connecticut to improve its ability to compete. We hear repeatedly from businesses about the importance of a well trained workforce. And well trained means ready for the jobs available in the marketplace. When a business comes in, our private universities need the flexibility and speed to be able to respond to those needs. This kind of partnership supports the workforce and creates job opportunities for our residents.

I have the honor of representing Fairfield University and live within just a few miles of Sacred Heart University, the University of Bridgeport and St. Vincent's. These schools are asking for your support in creating a more cost effective, consistent and competitive system, and so am I.

SB 24 as raised by your committee is the same language that received overwhelming support from both the House and the Senate last session. It provides a more timely, cost effective solution for our colleges and universities, creates a more consistent process for all institutions of higher education in Connecticut and most importantly, it allows for the flexibility needed in order to remain competitive and respond to workforce demands in a fluid market. I urge you to approve SB 24.